

- 32 -

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A disposable diaper having a front waist region, a rear waist region and a crotch region extending between said front
5 and rear waist regions comprising:

a liquid-absorbent core having an upper surface facing a wearer's skin and a lower surface facing away from the wearer's skin and extending over said crotch region and further into said front and rear waist regions;

10 a liquid-pervious first sheet having an upper section covering said upper surface of said core and a lower section covering said lower surface of said core;

and a liquid-impervious second sheet lying outside said lower section of said first sheet;

15 said upper section of said first sheet extending upwardly, in a vicinity of a longitudinal center line bisecting a transverse dimension of said diaper, from said upper surface of said core so as to define a tubular liquid passage extending in the longitudinal direction along said longitudinal center
20 line; and

said tubular liquid passage extending at least from said front waist region toward said crotch region.

- 33 -

2. The diaper according to Claim 1, wherein:

a slit formed completely through said core in a thickness direction thereof along said longitudinal center line extends in a longitudinal direction at least from said front waist region toward said crotch region; and

said lower section of said first sheet extends upward from said lower surface of said core through said slit so as to be exposed above said slit, generally describing a loop and cooperates with said upper section to define said tubular liquid passage.

3. The diaper according to Claim 1, wherein said first sheet is formed from a hydrophilic fibrous nonwoven fabric and said upper section defining said tubular liquid passage has a fiber density higher than a fiber density in a subsection of said upper section except said tubular liquid passage.

4. The diaper according to Claim 3, wherein said lower section defining said tubular liquid passage has a fiber density higher than a fiber density in a subsection of said lower section except said tubular liquid passage.